Sale of Cheaper Tea by Nepal

3849. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Nepal is selling cheaper versions of Darjeeling teas overseas, posing a threat to Indian tea industry;

(b) whether of late, many tea plantations have come up in Terai Region of Nepal growing Darjeeling type teas which sell at 1/3rd the price of Indian (Darjeeling) teas abroad;

(c) whether the Tea Board has sought the approval of Government to conduct auction in Kolkata for Nepal made teas thereby ensuring a better price and quicker payment for Nepali produce; and

(d) if so, whether Government have approved Tea Board's proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. Government/Tea Board do not have any such information. However, in order to prevent the entry of Nepal Green Tea Leaves into Darjeeling Plantation District, Tea Board has requested Govt. of West Bengal to take necessary measures to see that green leaves from Nepal are not used in the manufacture of Darjeeling tea. Further to avoid any possible infringement in relation to teas produced in Darjeeling District in the state of West Bengal, Tea Board has introduced the Darjeeling Certification Trade Mark to maintain the distinct identity of Darjeeling tea. With the formation of National Tea and Coffee Development Board in Nepal in the year 1988, new tea plantations have started coming up in Terai region of Nepal. The Government/ Tea Board does not have any information on sale price of Nepal Teas in different markets abroad.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. In the meeting of Indo-Nepal Inter-Governmental Committee held in December 1999, the issue of allowing participation of Nepalese tea producers in Kolkata tea auction was discussed. Different Tea Producers' Associations of India have objected to the proposal of allowing participation of Nepalese tea in Indian auction including Kolkata auction. Hence Tea Board/ Govt. of India have decided not to allow auction of Nepalese tea in India as of now.